

they would be important in improving the fertility of the soil. This is a matter to which the Horticulture Division of the Department has given considerable attention; but, of course, the main objection is that most cover-crops require to be ploughed in before having completed flowering. This difficulty might be got over by using comparatively low-growing plants, even if on ordinary farm lands they are looked upon as weeds. Smartweed and yarr have always impressed me in this particular. With regard to yarr, troublesome weed as it is, it is a valuable honey-producing plant, a fact which Southland apiarists know full well. Crimson clover and certain vetches such as grass-peas are suggested as useful honey-producing leguminous orchard cover-crops.

If some method of increasing the period during which bees may profitably work in orchards is not formulated, such areas must be ranked as of little importance for honey-production, and as bees should always be kept in or near orchards for pollinating purposes this would be very regrettable.

LIVE FENCES.

Live fences are not particularly favoured in New Zealand, but their capability of producing supplies of nectar should not be overlooked. One has only to think of the value of the African boxthorn in the production, in combination with white clover, of much of the excellent Taranaki honey to appreciate the value of live hedges of useful honey-plants. Unfortunately, the main plant originally used for this purpose in New Zealand—gorse—does not appear to be a large nectar-producer, and in this it seems to behave differently to what it does in other lands. It is, however, valuable from the pollen point of view. Hakea, although a noxious weed in the districts where most abundant, yields considerable quantities of nectar. In many localities certain species of barberry and hawthorn have been popular for fences, and are useful honey-plants. The tagasaste, again, is reputedly valuable. In general, however, the trend is towards the elimination of live fences and their substitution, so far as shelter purposes are concerned, by plantations of trees that are of no moment in honey-production. Still, so far as the beekeeper is concerned, he should favour living fences when they are composed of honey-producing plants. It is not, however, really known whether they are an economic proposition in such a country as this where labour is neither easily nor cheaply available. Whether, therefore, their value fully compensates for the expense of keeping them in order has yet to be determined.